

We all know the President's budget was received dead on arrival, but it signals the starting point to the annual budget process. It is my hope that wiser minds on both sides of the aisle will prevail as Congress embarks on the 2024 budget and appropriations process.

Americans are already pinching pennies, taking on debt, and struggling to pay their bills, and they deserve much, much more. They deserve relief, and our Nation needs relief in the form of tried-and-true just pure fiscal responsibility.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

REMEMBERING JUDITH HEUMANN

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Mr. President, I come to the floor today with a heavy yet full heart to pay tribute to someone I owe so much to, someone who millions of Americans living with disabilities owe so much to, Judy Heumann.

To honor her, I want to start by describing the environment we are in for those who may be listening in who may be visually impaired. We are in the United States Senate Chambers. I am sitting in the top row of chairs. I am sitting in my wheelchair. I am an Asian-American woman with brown hair, and I am wearing my signature red lipstick, just as Judy used to wear.

Judy was more than a friend; she was a personal hero to me. She was a person who devoted her life to expanding disability rights, to making sure that accessibility in this country is not an afterthought but, in fact, is the norm.

She worked so hard because she recognized a simple truth: that everyone, whether they know it or not, is just 1 day, 1 split-second away from acquiring a disability and needing the protections and rights that too many take for granted, rights that every American deserves.

You know, when I earned my disability in 2004, I actually considered myself pretty lucky. I say "lucky" because when I got home from Iraq, the Rehabilitation Act had been the law of the land for more than 30 years, and the Americans with Disabilities Act had been in place for more than a decade, both of which Judy had fought tirelessly to implement and, in fact, was the author of, and both of which empowered people like me to lead full lives. So, yes, pretty darn lucky because I wouldn't be able to roll my wheelchair through the maze of the Capitol Building and onto the Senate floor today to give this speech without those laws or without the unwavering advocacy and leadership of Judy Heumann.

You see, Judy passed her exams to earn a teaching license before people with disabilities had equal protections under the law, but she was denied that license by the school board even though she passed the exams—denied it just because of so-called concerns about legal liability in the workplace because she had a disability.

They said that because Judy used a wheelchair, she represented a fire hazard and couldn't safely teach in a classroom. Judy, rightfully so, wasn't going to take that for an answer, so she got to work. She worked and she worked and she worked. She fought and she fought some more. She made a fuss. She caused what civil rights giant John Lewis called "good trouble."

It is in large part because of her never giving up that the Rehabilitation Act exists, that the ADA exists, and that my full, wonderful, beautifully chaotic life is possible. For that and for so much more, I will be forever grateful for Judy Heumann.

Judy passed away earlier this month, but what she lived for will live on forever. I will never forget the hard-earned lessons she taught me about what it means to truly fight for our civil rights, to keep up that work day after day after day, and to make sure we empower those who come next to continue reaching toward a more just and more accessible future.

In her name, I will forever keep striving to bring about that better tomorrow when people with disabilities won't have to work so hard just to live our daily lives.

Rest in power, Judy. We miss you already.

190TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE U.S. PARTNERSHIP WITH THAILAND

Mr. President, "sawadee ka." I come to the floor today to commemorate a special moment, the 190th anniversary of the U.S. partnership with the Kingdom of Thailand.

I am an American, but my Thai heritage makes me a living example of the unshakeable bond between our two nations.

Our nations have a long, long history of friendship. For centuries, our countries have learned from and leaned on each other militarily, diplomatically, economically, culturally—you name it. From the environment to our economies, national security to cyber security, we have helped one another grow and evolve, adapting to a world that is evermore connected, adapting to an era in which technology allows allies half a world away to be there for each other in half an instant.

There is a reason Thailand is often called Washington's oldest ally in Asia. Ever since an American ship landed on Thailand's shores more than 200 years ago, ever since President Andrew Jackson and Thai King Rama III signed the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation formalizing peaceful relations between our countries, ever since King Mongkut offered to send elephants to President Abraham Lincoln an ocean away, our nations have proven that there is no greater asset than a partner you can count on in times of both peace and conflict. Time after time, we have worked side by side to catch the bad actors running international criminal networks, to give humanitarian relief to those who need it, to keep the peace far beyond our own borders.

We have seen our shared interests and values manifest time after time over the past 190 years. To name just a few examples, more than 300,000 people of Thai descent—myself included—live in the United States today, and thousands more come to study every semester.

The jointly run Armed Forces Research Institute of Medical Sciences has been at the forefront of research on infectious diseases since the 1960s, developing treatment for a host of diseases that have saved millions of lives in both our countries and around the world.

Under a 2002 framework, hundreds of U.S. companies have invested in Thailand, fueling bilateral trade of over \$74 billion in 2020 alone.

And, during World War II, the United States worked with Thai students in the United States and dissidents inside Thailand to create the Free Thai Movement. Then, our security alliance was eventually formalized under the Manila Pact of 1954 and the Thanat-Rusk communique in 1962. And, now, the Joint U.S. Military Assistance Group in Thailand helps organize more than 400 joint exercises per year, including Cobra Gold, the largest multilateral exercise in the Indo-Pacific region.

In 2023, with more and more geopolitical threats rising by the day, the strength of our bond is as important as ever. Our alliance provides some sense of stability amidst that chaos and some sense of security amidst the unpredictability. It helps to make a tenuous situation a little bit more tenable.

In just a few months, Thailand will hold national elections for the second time since the military coup of 2014. As in other countries, Thailand's path to democracy has had its challenges. There have been setbacks as well as advances. But in this moment, I know I speak for my colleagues in this Chamber when I say we look forward to an election that is free and fair, an election that cements Thailand on the road to a stable democratic system based on the rule of law, civilian authority, and respect for internationally recognized human rights.

Let me just close by saying: For the progress that Thailand has made toward that more democratic future, for the friendship our two nations have shared, as well as for all the years that I was lucky enough to call Thailand my home as a child, I am endlessly grateful, and I am forever proud to call myself an American of Thai descent.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF ATLANTA SPA SHOOTINGS

Mr. WARNOCK. Mr. President, I rise today to reflect on a dark day in Georgia. It was 2 years ago today that a hateful act of violence shook metropolitan Atlanta and reverberated across our State, our Nation, and the world.